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From A
Clergyman in the **City** *M. 44 IX. 3021*

FRIEND *in the Country,*

His Reasons for not Reading the Declaration:

A REPLY to

TO THE

City-Minister's LETTER

FROM

His FRIEND in the *Country*.

L O N D O N, Printed for J. O. 1688.

The County minister's declaration on the City's petition for relief - his answer, and the

AN ANSWER to

A LETTER

From A

Clergyman in the City

To his

FRIEND in the County.

Containing

His Reasons for not Reading the Declaration.

WITH

A REPLY to

AN ANSWER

TO THE

City-Minister's LETTER

FROM

HIS FRIEND in the County.

LONDON, Printed for A. A. 1888.

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ANSWER

TO A LETTER

From a Clergyman in the City, to
his Friend in the Country, Con-
taining his REASONS for not
Reading the Declaration

With Allowance, June the 4th 1688.

SIR,

LETTER.

I Do not wonder at your concern for finding an Order of Council published in the Gazette for Reading the Kings Declaration for Liberty of Conscience in all Churches and Chappels in this Kingdom. You desire to know my Thoughts about it, and I shall freely tell them: for this is not a time to be reserved.

Our Enemies who have given our Gracious King this Counsel against us, have taken the most effectual way not only to ruin us but to make us appear the Instruments of our own Ruin, that what course soever we take, we shall be undone, and one side or other will conclude that we have undone our selves, and fall like Fools.

ANSWER.

* They who had formerly heard the frequent Sermons upon Loyalty preach'd over Tea and Coffee at Sam's Coffee-House, would hardly then have believ'd that ever any Clergyman of London of that stamp, would have been seen in publick pickering against the Orders of his Prince, especially issued forth after mature debate in Council. I know not how he can boast such a vast

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Rock of Loyalty as this Gentleman pretends to, when he shall be so homely as to tax the King with following Council to the Ruin of his Subjects. So that the business of this Pamphlet is to render his Majesty a person that follows ill Counsel to the Ruin of the Church of England's Party. Nor is it to be question'd but that this single Clergyman speaks the sense of many more, or at least would have many more believe, what he does. *That what course soever they take they shall be undone.* And yet we find that his Majesty has publickly declar'd it to be his Aim to fix his Government upon such a Foundation as may make his Subjects happy in the enjoyment of their Religion with freedom of Exercise, and their Property without Inyalion. However this *Loyal Town Clergyman* is an Infidel that will give no credit at all to the solemn Attestations of the King in this particular. Nay he will have it, that both the one and the other side will conclude that they have undone themselves, and fall like fools; that is to say, should they have Read the Declaration in their Churches according to the order of Council. By which it is apparant that the Church of England men have a very bad opinion not only of the Declaration, but of the very design and meaning of it as if it were fram'd to draw them first into Inconvenience and then to undo them. For says he,

LETTER

To lose our Livings and Preferments, nay our Liberties and Lives in a plain and direct opposition to Popery, as suppose for refusing to read Mass in our Churches, or to swear to the Trent Creed, is an honourable way of falling; and has the divine comforts of suffering for Christ and his Religion; and I hope there is none of us but can cheerfully submit to the will of God in it. But this is not our present Case; to read the Declaration, is not to read the Mass, nor to profess the Romish Faith; and therefore some will judge that there is no hurt in reading it, and that to suffer for such a refusal, is not so fall like Confessors, but to suffer as Criminals for disobeying the lawful Commands of our Prince: but yet we judge, and we have the concurring Opinions of all the Nobility and Gentry with us, who have already suffered in this Cause, that to take away the Test and Penal Laws at this time, is but one step from the intruding of Popery; and therefore to read such a Declaration in our Churches, though it do not immediately bring Popery in, yet it sets open our Church doors for it, and then it will take its own time to enter:

So that should we comply with this Order, all good Protestants would despise and hate us, and then we may be easily crushed, and shall soon fall with great dishonour and without any pity. This is the difficulty of our Case; we shall be censur'd on both sides, but with this difference: We shall fall a little sooner by not reading the Declaration, if our Gracious Prince resent this as an act of an obstinate and peevish or factious Disobedience, as our Enemies will be sure to represent it to him; We shall as certainly fall, and not long after, if we do read it, and then we shall fall unpisied and despised, and it may be with the Curses of the Nation, whom we have ruined by our compliance; and this is the way never to rise more. And may I suffer all that can be suffered in this World, rather than contribute to the final Ruin of the best Church in the World.

A N S W E R

Here is a very plausible Harangue built upon the bare supposition of a single Town Clergyman, while he refuses to read the Declaration which is the very Act of his Majesties Grace and Favour that secures him from all those fears and jealousies which he labours to instill into the People. Nor is it to be thought that men of Reason and Loyalty, will as the City Clergyman seems to be convinc'd, so readily believe that the King and his Council sit to impose Dilemma's upon the Subject. *We shall fall if we do, and we shall fall if we do not read it.* But this is only the Clergyman's supposal; On the other side, the refusal to read it is an unquestionable Act of Disobedience to the Command of the Sovereign Authority, than which there cannot be a greater mark of that Disloyalty which the Clergy of the Establish'd Religion so much disown. Besides that it is a Disobedience to the Orders of the Church it self, which enjoyns her Ministers to read during the time of Divine Service whatever is enjoyned by the King. But, says he, *the Reading such a Declaration in our Churches, though it do not immediately bring in Popery, yet it sets open our Church doors for it, and then it will take its own time to enter.* But says the Declaration, In the first place we do declare, That we will protect and maintain our Archbishops, Bishops and Clergy, and all other our Subjects of the Church of England, in the free exercise of their Religion, as by Law Establish'd, and in the full enjoyment of all their Possessions without any molestation or disturbance whatsoever: Here is

the word of a King to bar the Introducing of Popery so much fear'd : which if it were sacred as coming from the Lips of a Crowned Head, they would have render'd still more solemn by reading it in their Churches. And therefore the refusal of it seems to be rather an Act of wilful indiscretion, than of that Religious Care and wary Zeal to which the *Civ Clergy-man* pretends.

LETTER.

Let us then examine this matter impartially, as those who have no mind either to ruine themselves, or to ruine the Church : I suppose no Minister of the Church of England can give his consent to the Declaration. Let us then consider whether reading the Declaration in our Churches be not an interpretative Consent, and will not with great reason be interpreted to be so : For,

First, By our Law all Ministerial Officers are accountable for their Actions : The Authority of Superiors, though of the King himself, cannot justify inferiour Officers, much less the Ministers of State, if they should execute any illegal Commands ; which shews, that our Law does not look upon the Ministers of Church or State to be meer Machines and Tools to be managed wholly by the Will of Superiours, without exercising any Act of Judgment or Reason themselves ; for then inferiour Ministers were no more punishable than the Horses are which draw an innocent man to Tyburn : and if inferiour Ministers are punishable, then our Laws suppose that what we do in obedience to Superiours, we make our own Act by doing it, and I suppose that signifies our Consent, in the eye of the Law, to what we do. It is a Maxim in our Law, That the King can do no wrong ; and therefore if any wrong be done, the Crime and Guilt is the Minister's who does it : For the Laws are the King's publick Will, and therefore he is never supposed to command any thing contrary to Law ; nor is any Minister, who does an illegal Action, allowed to pretend the King's Command and Authority for it : and yet this is the only Reason I know, why we must not obey a Prince against the Laws of the Land, or the Laws of God, because what we do, let the Authority be what it will that commands it, becomes our own Act, and we are responsible for it ; and then as I observed before, it must imply our own Consent.

A N S W E R.

This Paragraph runs all along upon a meer Begging the Question. For it would enforce an Argument from a Topick that neither

ther can nor ought to be allowed him: Besides, that it smells very strong of Common-wealth Logicks: Aspickeering against the Power of Princes, and insinuating the Declaration to be illegal, contrary to the Laws of God and the Land, and therefore not to be obey'd. So that a greater presumption certainly could not have enter'd the Breast of a Clergy-man of the Church of England, than thus to question the Legality of the King's Publick Acts: Certainly it was never thought unlawful, till this Gentleman found it out, for a King to grant an Act of Indulgence and a Toleration of Religion to his Subjects. And then again to say, *the King can do no wrong*, insinuates that some Body has *done wrong*, in advising the Order: which is a Reflexion of too great Importance for men of Loyal Dispositions to scan. If he mean that the Order, or rather the Declaration, is contrary to the Law of the Land, that is to say, to the *Penal Laws*, and the Law enforcing the *Test*, that is absolutely to deny the King's Royal Power of Dispensation, which has already render'd them invalid. For he should have first made it out that the *Penal Laws* and *Test* were such Sacred and Inviolable Statutes, that all things done contrary to them, were contrary to Justice and Equity, before he had so sily Inferred an Impossibility of giving his Consent to reading the *Declaration*, as contrary to the Law of the Land, and the Act of a Superiour Authority not justifiable by the King himself. But this Gentleman did not consider that there is no such Stress to be laid upon the Sanction of the *Penal Laws*, and that supporting the *Test*. For that the Conditions of all Humane Laws are, That the Law be Honest, Just, Possible, Convenient to Time and Place, and Conformable to Religion and Reason. In every one of which Characters the Penal Laws, &c. are deficient, if for no other, though there are many, yet for that very Reason alledg'd in His Majesties Declaration, because they discourage and disable his Majesties Subjects that are well inclin'd and fit to serve him, from doing him those Services which by the Law of Nature they are bound to do. But he goes on

L E T T E R.

Secondly, *The Ministers of Religion have a greater tie and obligation than this, because they have the care and conduct of mens Souls, and therefore are bound to take care that what they publish in their Churches, be neither contrary to the Laws of the Land, nor to the good*

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of the Church: For the Ministers of Religion are not lookt upon as common Cryers, but what they Read, they are supposed to recommend too, though they do no more than Read it: and therefore to read any thing in the Church, which I do not consent to and approve, may which I think prejudicial to Religion, and the Church of God, as well as contrary to the Laws of the Land, is to Mis-guide my People, and to Disseemble with God and Men, because it is presum'd, that I neither do, nor ought to read any thing in the Church, which I do not in some degree approve.

A N S W E R.

If Arrogance and high Conceit might pass for Arguments, here is a fair shew of both: For one would think that the Head of the Church might be as competent a Judge of what is fittest to be read in the Churches under his protection, as the Parson of the Parish. Whoever thinks otherwise must have a very low opinion of the Head, who takes upon him to be so wise and censorious a Member. When the Head of the Church sends his Mandates and Injunctions to his inferior Ministers, Reason does in no measure justify their Disputes and Oppositions to the Inverting the Order of Nature. And therefore it would have argu'd a much more noble confidence in the truth of his Majesties Sincerity and Piety, to have read without boggling, the Declaration recommended to their publishing in Churches, which they could not in good Manners believe that their Sovereign Head would have enjoyn'd them, had he not fore-deem'd it both proper and warrantable. We find the Declaration grounded upon the solid foundation of Constant Royal Sense and Opinion, which no question, had the Concurrence of many able Divines of the first Order in the Church, among whom that Learned Prelate, and famous Combatant against the Church of Rome, the B. of L. appears to be none of the meanest. So that upon so fair a poise, besides the over-balancing judgment of the King himself, the Opposition of any other *Synhedrim* within this Nation, can never be thought to be so equal as they pretend, in their own Cause; A Cause wherein Interest, rather than any deep sense of Religion seems to carry the greater sway. The Declaration duly consider'd, and fram'd with mature deliberation, is of one Judgment, but They, hand over-head, are of another: The Declaration finding the Consciences of the Subjects pester'd and incumber'd with Penal Laws, Oaths, and Tests, endeavor

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ours to remove those incumbrances. They on the other side, strive to uphold the Dragons of their Animosity against all other Opinions but their own. Who are now to be the Deciders of this Controversie? who indeed but the Sovereign Authority in the person of the King who is Gods Vicegerent; and to whom for that very reason, unless they will deprive him of that supreme Dignity, all other persons are bound to submit, there being no higher Tribunal upon Earth to give a more Authentic Determination. And therefore it was that Cicero in his Oration for Cluentius, tells us, that the Supreme Magistrate is the Judge of the Laws, and the chief Interpreter of the Law; we only the Servants of the Law, that we may be free. Which being so true as it is, what must be thought of them that set up an Interpretation of their own against the Interpretation of the Sovereign Magistrate? But the City Clergyman goes on with a very quaint Distinction,

LETTER.

Indeed, let mens private opinions be what they will, in the nature of the thing, he that reads such a Declaration to his People, teaches them by it. For is not Reading Teaching? Suppose then I do not consent to what I read, yet I consent to teach my People what I read; and herein is the evil of it; for it may be it were no fault to consent to the Declaration, but if I consent to teach my People what I do not consent to, my self, I am sure that is a great one: And he who can distinguish between consenting to read the Declaration, and consenting to teach the People by the Declaration, when reading the Declaration is teaching it, has a very subtle distinguishing-Conscience. Now if consenting to read the Declaration be a consent to teach it my People, then the natural Interpretation of Reading the Declaration, is, That he who Reads it, in such a solemn teaching-manner, Approves it. If this be not so, I desire to know, why I may not read an Homily for Transubstantiation, or invocation of Saints, or the worship of Images, if the King sends me such good Catholic Homilies, and commands me to read them? And thus we may instruct our People in all the points of Popery, and recommend it to them with all the Sophistry and artificial Insinuations, in obedience to the King, with a very good Conscience, because without our consent: If it be said, this would be a contradiction to the Doctrine of our Church by Law Established; so I take the Declaration to be; And if we may read the Declaration

claration contrary to Law; because it does not imply our consent to it; so we may Popish Homilies, for the bare reading them will not imply our consent; no more than the reading the Declaration does: But whether I consent to the Doctrine or no, it is certain I consent to teach my People this Doctrine; and it is to be considered, whether an honest man can do this:

A N S W E R

The first Question here is, Whether a man that consents to read, consents to teach? Or rather, Whether Teaching and Reading be all one? Certainly no man of reason but will believe the City-Clergy-man was very hard put to it to lay the stress of a Refusal to obey the Command of Sovereign Authority upon a Cavill about the signification of a word or two. Who could have imagin'd it would ever have been requisite for the Council to have consulted a Tribunal of Grammarians to obviate such an Objection as this, before they issu'd forth the Order for Reading the Declaration. But whether Teaching and Reading be all one, is nothing here to the purpose; For there is not any thing as yet appears in the Letter which proves the Declaration unlawful to be read: Which he ought first to have done before he had gone about to split the signification of Words to gratifie a Conscience, therefore squeamish because over-surfetted with the Kings Favours. For there is no Person in *England* ought to uphold that Law which the King condemns, if it be not in it self unjust and contrary to the Union of Mankind. For the Introducing of Popery into *England*, or the Abolishing of any Laws that may prevent it, if it be the Will and Pleasure of the Sovereign Government, is no more illegal in it self, than it was for the *United Netherlands* to abolish Popery and introduce the Protestant Religion into their Dominions, contrary to the Constitutions of the Empire, and the Laws of *Spain*. So that this City-Clergyman moves all this while upon an Assertion, that the Declaration is illegal and contrary to the Law of the Land. For if the King of *England* may be depriv'd of his undoubted Right of Altering, Repealing, or Suspending such Laws as are inconsistent with those Maxims of Rule which he proposes at his coming to the Crown, and which he finds destructive to the greatest part of his Subjects, he loses one of the greatest Advantages which he enjoys, to pursue those Methods of Govern-

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ment which he deems most proper for the renowning his Reign in future History. So much the more hard, when the only means which he accounts most proper for his purposes shall be condemn'd for Unlawful by a nice Splitter of Verbal signification. And yet the distinction of Reading and Consenting is not so difficult as he pretends. For Consent is an agreement of Thoughts as well as Words. — But a man may read the Story of *Bel* and the *Dragon* in the Church, and yet not agree it to be Orthodox. Nor can a man by reading be said to teach his People, unless he inculcates what he reads by Instruction; for tho' Instruction comprehends Reading, Reading does not comprehend Instruction. Which is the reason there are so many ignorant Persons in the world, to whom the *Bible* and the *Credo* it self are read every *Sunday* in the Year, and yet at the Years end they are not able to tell ye whose Son *Jesus Christ* is, or who was *Solomon's* Father. And whereas he says, the King might as well command him to read a *Homily* for *Transubstantiation*, as the *Declaration*, the Inference is false, The one being an Actual Invasion upon the Articles of the Church of *England*, from which the *Declaration* upon the Word of a King, is the very thing that secures him; the other only a Civil Duty requir'd in Obedience to the King's Command: and the Refusal of it only a piece of *Fineness* to render the King's Authority and his Proceedings suspected to the People.

LETTER.

Thirdly, I suppose no man will doubt, but the King intends, that our Reading the *Declaration* should signify to the Nation, our Consent and Approbation of it; for the *Declaration* does not want Publishing, for it is sufficiently known already: but our Reading it in our Churches must serve instead of Addresses of Thanks, which the Clergy generally refused, tho it was only to Thank the King for his Gracious Promises renewed to the Church of *England*, in his *Declaration*, which was much more innocent, than to publish the *Declaration* it self in our Churches: This would persuade me, that the King thinks our reading the *Declaration*, to signify our Consent, and that the People will think it to be so. And he that can satisfy his Conscience, to do an action without consent, which the nature of the Thing, the Design, and intention of the Command, and the Sense of the People expound to be a Consent, may, I think, as well satisfy himself with Equivocations and mental Reservations.

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ANSWER.

Here is nothing still but barely repeated Supposition, together with an open and glory'd-in Confession of the Ingratitude of the generality of the Church of England than which he could not certainly have bestow'd a worse Character either upon himself or his Friends. Since it was an Obstinate Ingratitude that no renewances of the King's Favours could reconcile to him, as proceeding from a sower Disgust, that his Majesty had granted to others the same Liberty which they enjoy'd. As if all Mankind besides them, were bound to groan under the continual Yoak of their *Personal Laws and Tests*, no less Rigorous and Uncharitable. To the remainder of this part, the Gentleman has form'd a very substantial Answer of himself. For, says he,

LETTER.

There are two things to be answered to this, which must be considered.

I. That the People understand our Minds, and see that this is matter of Force upon us, and meer Obedience to the King.

ANSWER.

Then the Refusal was a work of Supererogation, the People being better instructed, than all their reading could teach them; and then they must fall that way by going about to instruct them by their Obstinacy, who were of opinion that their Obedience would have been a far better Admonishment. To which he answers,

LETTER.

1. That possibly the People do understand that the matter of the Declaration is against our Principles: But is this any excuse, that we read that, and by reading recommend that to them, which is against our own Consciences and Judgments? Reading the Declaration would be no Fault at all, but our Duty, when the King commands it, did we approve of the matter of it; but to consent to teach our People such Doctrines as we think contrary to the Laws of God, or the Laws of the Land, does not lessen but aggravate the Fault, and People must be very good natur'd to think this an Excuse.

2. It is not likely that all the people will be of a mind in this matter, some may excuse it, others, and those it may be the most, the best, and the wisest men, will condemn us for it, and then how shall we justify our selves against their Censures? when the world will be divided in their Opinions, the plain way is certainly the best, to do what we can justify our selves, and then let men judge as they please. No men in England will
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be pleas'd with our Reading the Declaration, but those who hope to make great advantage of it against us, and against our Church & Religion: others will severely condemn us for it, & censure us as false to our Religion, and as Betrayers both of Church and State: and besides that, it does not become a Minister of Religion, to do any thing, which in the opinion of the most charitable men can only be excus'd; for what needs an excus'e, is either a fault or looks very like one; besides this I say, I will not trust mens Charity; those who have suffer'd themselves in this Cause, will not excus'e us for fear of suffering; those who are inclin'd to excus'e us now, will not do so when they consider the thing better, and come to feel the ill consequences of it: when our Enemies open their Eyes, & tell them what our Reading the Declaration signified, which they will then tell us we ought to have seen before, tho they were not bound to see it; for we are to guide and instruct them, not they us.

A N S W E R.

Tempora mutantur & nos mutamur in illis—— Time was when there was nothing more abominable, more hainous, or more cry'd down by the Gowned Clergy of England, than *Vox Populi*; now *Vox populi* is the only *Suprema lex* that guides them; they have no other fears than of the Censurations and Censures of *Vox Populi*: *Vox populi* is *Vox Dei*, and they dare not read the King's Declaration for fear of *Vox populi*: And all this out of an Infallible Certainty, that no people in England will be pleas'd with their reading the Declaration but their Enemies. More than this, they see ill Consequences in the Declaration, and find Doctrines in the Declaration contrary to the Laws of God and the Land; invisible however to all those vast numbers of lowd and thankful Addressers for the publishing of it. Quick-sighted Synxes in their own Concerns: but such as car'd so little for the Voice of the People, that they never melted at the Groans of the People, when they had the Scourgé in their hands.

L E T T E R.

II. Others therefore think, that when we read the Declaration, we should publicly profess, that it is not our own judgment, but that we only read it in obedience to the King; and then our reading it cannot imply our consent to it: Now this is only *Protestatio contra factum*, which all people will laugh at, and scorn us for: for such a solemn reading it in the time of Divine Service, when all men ought to be most grave and serious, and far from dissembling with God or Men, does in the nature of the thing imply our approbation; and should we declare the contrary, when we read it, what shall we say to those who ask us, Why then do you read it? But let those who have a mind try this way, which, for my part, I take to be a greater and more unjustifiable

justifiable provocation of the King, than not to read it; and, I suppose, those who do not read it, will be thought plainer and better men, and will escape as well as those who read it and protest against it: and yet nothing less than an express Protestation against it will save this matter; for only to say, they read it merely in obedience to the King, does not express their dissent: it signifies indeed, that they would not have read it, if the King had not commanded it; but these words do not signify, that they disapprove of the Declaration, when their reading it, though only in obedience to the King, signifies their approbation of it, as much as actions can signify a consent: let us call to mind how it fared with those in King Charles the First's Reign, who read the Book of Sports, as it was called, and then preached against it.

A N S W E R.

Then it appears that the Declaration has been read, and that by several Gentlemen of the Church of England also. So that it appears that the reading of it is not of that dangerous Consequence to the Conscience, as the Author of the *Letter* would pretend to. For we are to have that charity for those that read it as for those that refused it, that the former had as much care for their Consciences, as the latter. Now then to what purpose all these Terrors and alights of Conscience, all this dread of the censures of the People for reading it, since the business admits such a positive variety of Opinion. The Loyal and Obedient may read it, but the Scrupulous and Refractory will not. Well then, if the case be so, the *City Clergyman* should have done well, to have reserv'd his Niceties and Slicing of significations to himself, and not have gone about so Zealously to spread the infection of his Scruples to the discouragement of others. But he has past the Rubicon and will forward.

L E T T E R.

To return then to our Argument; If reading the Declaration in our Churches be in the nature of the action, in the intension of the command, in the opinion of the People, an interpretative consent to it, I think myself bound in conscience not to read it, because I am bound in conscience not to approve it:

A N S W E R.

To this the Loyal Gentlemen that read it, reply, That if Reading the Declaration in their Churches, be neither in the nature of the Action, nor in the Intention of the Command, nor in the Opinion of the People an Interpretative Consent to it; they think themselves bound in conscience to read it, because they are bound in conscience to approve it. But, says he,

L E T T E R.

It is against the Constitution of the Church of England, which is established by Law, and to which I have subscribed, and therefore am bound in conscience to teach nothing contrary to it, while this Obligation lasts.

A N S W E R.

He must of necessity allow the Constitution of the Church of England to be a strange uncharitable constitution, that will not allow Liberty of Conscience to any but it self. And it is his misfortune that he has subscribed to a Church that wants the bond of Perfection, which is the reason that many believes he mistakes the Constitution of the Church of England.

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L E T T E R
 It is to teach an Unlimited and Universal Toleration, which the Parliament in 72. declared Illegal, and which has been Condemned by the Christian Church in all Ages.

A N S W E R.

What the Parliament Declared in 72. signifies nothing against the Authority of the Scripture, which all along declares the contrary. And whereas the Gentleman is pleased to say, That Universal Toleration has been condemned by the Christian Church in all Ages; There is nothing more contrary to the infinite Sayings of the Primitive Fathers and their Successors, and that celebrated Maxim of Tertullian, *Religionis non est Religionem cohere.*

L E T T E R.

It is to teach my People, that they need never come to Church more, but have my free Leave, as they have the King's, to go to a Conventicle or to Mass.

A N S W E R.

This is like Cardinal Wolsey, Ego & Rex, His leave and the King's. But they are a sorry sort of People, That do not know already, That a Rector of a Parish is no Sovereign; but that the People may come and go where they please without his Leave.

L E T T E R.

It is to teach the Dispensing Power, which alters what has been formerly thought, the whole Constitution of this Church and Kingdom, which we dare not do till we have the Authority of Parliament for it.

A N S W E R.

It seems the King's Authority signifies nothing, with this City Clergyman. But if he had the Authority of Parliament for it, he would stretch his Conscience, and Read the Declaration. In the mean time, The King's Dispensive Power, is no Business for a Man in his Station to meddle with. Nor is he to be such a Judge of Royal Declarations, as to be the Interpreter of their Meaning, or Intention. That Power is not within the Verge of his Desk or Pulpit either, neither can the

Authority of Parliament warrant any such Boldness among Ecclesiasticks.

LETTER.

It is to Recommend to our People, the Choice of such Persons to sit in Parliament, as shall take away the Test and Penal Laws, which most of the Nobility and Gentry of the Nation have declared their Judgment against.

ANSWER.

Then; not to Read the Declaration, is to recommend to the People, the Choice of such Persons, as shall not take away the Test and Penal Laws; as if the Peoples Election of Parliament Men depended upon the Recommendation of the City-Clergymen. But the Declaration requires no such Officious Recommendation from them; And therefore the Gentleman might have spared his Complement to the Nobility and Gentry.

LETTER.

It is to condemn all those Great and Worthy Patriots of their Country, who forfeited the dearest thing in the World to them, next a good Conscience, viz. The Favour of their Prince, and a great many Honourable and Profitable Employments with it, rather than consent to that Proposal of taking away the Test and Penal Laws, which they apprehend destructive to the Church of England and the Protestant Religion; and he who can in Conscience do all this, I think need scruple nothing.

ANSWER.

The Nobility and Gentry are mightily beholding to the City-Clergyman for his kind Encomiums: But whether they would have thought it any Condemnation of their Resolutions, in Reference to the Penal Laws and Test, is uncertain; for the Nobility and Gentry do not depend upon this Gentleman's Divinity; their Motions, and the Circumstances that guide their Actions being of a higher Nature, than to care for the Condemnation of their Chaplains. However, if the Nobility and Gentry were so Kind to do what they did for their sakes, the City-Clergyman has ill retaliated their Favour, to lay the Load of his Actual Disobedience upon the Shoulders of the Nobility and Gentry of the Nation. But now he's come to his Effects and ill Consequences: for say he,

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L E T T E R.

For let us consider further, What the Effects and Consequences of our Reading the Declaration are likely to be, and I think they are Matter of Conscience too, when they are Evident and Apparent.

This will certainly render our Persons and Ministry infinitely Contemptible, which is against that Apostolick Canon, Let no man despise thee, Tit. 2. 15. That is, so to Behave himself in his Ministerial Office, as not to fall under Contempt; and therefore this obliges the Conscience, not to make our selves Ridiculous, nor to render our Ministry, our Counsels, Exhortations, Preaching, Writing, of no effect, which is a thousand times worse than being Silenced: Our Sufferings will Preach more effectually to the People, when we cannot Speak to them: But he who for Fear or Cowardize, or the Love of this World, betrays his Church and Religion by undue Compliances, and will certainly be thought to do so, may continue to Preach, but to no purpose; and when we have rendered our selves Ridiculous and contemptible, we shall then quickly Fall, and Fall unpierced.

A N S W E R.

He is now wrapt up in the Spirit of Prophecy, what Strange things will befall him for reading the Declaration, which he calls a Betraying the Church by undue Compliances: But the Prophet mistakes the Points that renders the Ministerial Office he means Ridiculous; for while they keep to the Business of Sound Doctrine, and meely True Divinity, there is not a more Profound or Learned Clergy in the World, than are they of the Church of England; but when they will be Studying the Points of Royal Declarations, which are Acts of State, will be making their Pulpits the Stages of Farce and Satyr, will be Interloping and Intruding into State Affairs, which nothing at all concern them; when they will be Teaching the King, the Judges, Deputy Lieutenants, and all other Magistrates, their Duties: This is that which renders the Ministry, before mentioned, or any Ministry in the World, Ridiculous. And it is to be feared, The City-Clergyman has not altogether freed himself from that Contempt, in calling the Reading of the Declaration, a Betraying of the Church by undue Compliances; and then Complementing the Nobility and Gentry of the Nation to justify his Ridiculous Language; and all this to gain Popularity, or to preserve the Possession of his Living under

the Name of the Protestant Religion; for he must not take it amiss, That others dive with the same severity into his Meaning as he dives into the King's Intentions.

L E T T E R.

Com. 4. • There is nothing will so effectually send to the final Ruin of the Church of England, because our Reading the Declaration will Discourage, or Provoke, or misguide, all the Friends the Church of England has: can we blame any man for not preserving the Laws and the Religion of our Church and Nation, when we our selves will venture nothing for it? can we blame any Man for consenting to Repeal the Test and Penal Laws, when we recommend it to them by Reading the Declaration? Have we not Reason to expect that the Nobility and Gentry, who have already Suffered in this Cause; when they hear themselves condemned for it in all the Churches of England, will think it time to mend such a Fault, and reconcile themselves to their Prince? and if our Church fall this way, is there any Reason to expect that it should ever rise again? These Consequences are almost as evident as Demonstrations, and let it be what it will in it self; which I foresee will destroy the Church of England and the Protestant Religion and Interest, I think I ought to make as much Conscience of doing it, as of doing the most immoral Action in Nature.

A N S W E R.

Here we find him talking as if the Final Ruine of the Church of England, lay upon the Church of England-mens Reading or Not Reading the Declaration, and that by Not Reading it, they had saved the Palladium's and Ancilia of their Religion. And all these Rodomontado's upon bare Suppositions and Imaginations no ways compatible to Reason; for it is not Rational to Believe, That the Nobility and Gentlemen of England, when they delivered their Sentiments contrary to what was Proposed to them concerning the Test (for as to the Penal Laws, 'tis well known, Their Judgments are much more Remiss) did what they did for Fear of being Condemned by the Levies whom they feed. 'Tis therefore a Presumption in the City-clergyman to arrogate in the Plural Number such a Power over the Nobility and Gentry, as if they were bound to Justifie his and his Friend's particular Acts of Disobedience,

disfence, and could not be Safe in their Resolutions, unless they were Obstinate. What was proposed to the Nobility and Gentry was one thing, what was commanded them was another; and there is a great Difference between not Consenting to a Proposal, and not Submitting to a Sovereign Command.

LETTER.

To say that these mischievous Consequences are not absolutely necessary, and therefore do not affect the Conscience, because we are not certain they will follow, is a very mean Objection. Moral Actions indeed have not such necessary Consequences, as Natural Causes have Necessary Effects; because no Moral Causes act necessarily. Reading the Declaration will not as necessarily destroy the Church of England, as Fire burns Wood; but if the Consequence be plain and evident, the most likely thing that can happen, if it be unreasonable to expect any other, if it be what is plainly intended and designed, either I must never have any regard to Moral Consequences of my Actions, or if ever they are to be considered, they are in this case.

Why are the Nobility and Gentry so extremely averse to the Repeal of the Test and Penal Laws? why do they forfeit the King's Favour, and their Honourable Stations, rather than comply with it? If you say that this tends to destroy the Church of England and the Protestant Religion, I ask whether this be the necessary consequence of it? whether the King cannot keep his Promise to the Church of England if the Test and Penal Laws be repealed? We cannot say, but this may be: and yet the Nation does not think fit to try it; and we commend those Great Men who deny it; and if the same Questions were put to us, we think we ought in Conscience to deny them our selves: and are there not as high probabilities, that our Reading the Declaration will promote the Repeal of the Test and Penal Laws, as that such a Repeal will ruin our Constitution, and bring in Popery upon us? Is it not as probable, that such a Compliance in us, will disoblige all the Nobility and Gentry, who have hitherto been firm to us, as that when the power of the Nation is put into Popish Hands; by the Repeal of such Tests and Laws, the Priests and Jesuits may find some salvo for the Kings Conscience, and persuade him to forget his Promise to the Church of England? and if the probable ill consequences of Repealing the Test and Penal Laws, be a good reason not to comply with it, I cannot see but that the as probable

probable ill consequences of Reading the Declaration, is as good a reason
not to Read it.

A N S W E R.

These are all meer Comments and Descants of the City-Clergyman, upon the Honour and Conscience of his Majesty, and the evil delign of the Declaration upon the Church of *England*, drawn from Probabilities of the evil consequences of Repealing the Penal Laws and Test, which the Church of *England* must no more part with, then the *Jews* with their Ark, without exposing themselves to utter ruine and destruction. For the charitable Clergyman takes no care of any other part of the Protestant Religion, so the Church of *England* be secure. To all which if he would have but vouchsaf'd to have read the Declaration, he might have found an Answer shining fully out, and dispelling all the Fogs and Mists of his Probable Consequences in His Majesty's own words; where he declares a second time, *That ever since His granting the Indulgence, he has made it His principal Care to see it preserved without distinction; And farther adds his Resolutions, To use His utmost Endeavours to Establish Liberty of Conscience on such just and equal foundations, as will render it unalterable, and secure to All People the free Exercise of their Religion for ever.* But this will not serve the City-Clergy-man's turn; he must have the Ruins of Temporal as well as Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in his own hand, and drive on for ever, or else there is nothing to be done. They are like *Cesar*, contemning all Superiors; and like *Pompey*, disdaining all Equals. A passionate conceit of their own Perfection above all other, which no Man of common sense can be reconcil'd to; and a convincing Argument that those Persons must have but little or no Conscience themselves, who with so much vigor and obstinacy labour to uphold a Civil Persecution of Penal Laws and Tests, so directly opposite to all the Dictates of Conscience and Reason.

L E T T E R.

The most material Objection is, That the Dissenters, whom we ought not to provoke, will exposed our not Reading it, to be the effect of a Persecuting Spirit: Now I wonder Men should lay any weight on this, who will not allow the most probable consequences of our Actions,

to have any influence upon Conscience; for if we must compare consequences, to dissolve all the Nobility and Gentry by Reading it, is likely to be much more fatal, than to anger the Dissenters; and it is more likely, and there is much more reason for it, that one should be offended than the other: For the Dissenters who are Wise and Considering, are sensible of the Snare themselves, and though they desire Ease and Liberty, they are not willing to have it with such apparent hazard of Church and State: I am sure that though we were never so desirous that they might have their Liberty, (and when there is opportunity of shewing our Inclinations without danger, they may find that we are not such Persecutors as we are represented,) yet we cannot consent that they should have it this way, which they will find the dearest Liberty that ever was granted.

ANSWER.

After his Complements put upon the Nobility and Gentry of the Nation, the Author of the Letter descends to scrape a new acquaintance with the Dissenters, and fain would draw them into his Belief, upon a very odd surmise, that they are now in some kind of manner reconcil'd. But the Complement is at such a remote distance, that he betray'd his Politicks to court them at such an indifferent rate. And indeed his Expressions are so obscure, that if this Church of England Man, is so nice that he dare not trust the King upon such clear and solemn Promises, the Dissenters, who have had such severe Experience of their Favours, have much less reason to credit the forc'd Complement of the City-Clergyman. This is only to be wonder'd at, that the City-Clergyman should make the King so dear a Seller of Liberty of Conscience, when there was no Price could purchase it from the Persecution of the Penal Law-Men, his undoubted Brethren.

LETTER.

This Sir, is our Case in short, the Difficulties are great on both sides, and therefore now if ever, we ought to besiege Heaven with our Prayers, for Wisdom, and Counsel and Courage, that God would protect his Church and Reformed Christianity, against all the devices of their Enemies: Which is the daily and hearty Prayer of,

SIR,

May. 22. 1688.

Your Friend and Brother.

ANSWER.

A N S W E R.

Being thus come from his Politicks to his Prayers, 'tis time to leave him, not doubting but if his Prayers be Just, they will be heard; if not, neither his Letter nor his Prayers will signify any thing.

P O S T S C R I P T.

I Have just now seen H. Care's Paper, called, The Publick Occurrences, which came out to day, and cannot but set you right as to his News about the Reading of the Declaration on Sunday: He tells you, ' That several Divines of the Church of England, in and about the City, eminent for their Piety and Moderation, did Yesterday Read His Majesty's late Declaration in their Churches, according to the Order in that behalf; but some (to the great surprize of their Parishioners) were pleased to decline it. You in the Country are from this Account to believe, that it was Read here by the generality of the Clergy, and by the eminent Men among them: But I can and do assure you, that this is one of the most impudent Lyes that ever was printed: For as to this City which hath above a Hundred Parishes in it, it was Read only in Four or Five Churches, all the rest and best of the Clergy refusing it every where. I will spare their Names who Read it; but should I mention them, it would make you who know this City, a little heartily to deride H. C's. Account of them. And for the Surprize he talks of, the contrary of it is so true, that in Wood-street, where it was Read by one Dr. M. the People generally went out of the Church. This I tell you, that you may be provided for the future against such an impudent Lyar, who, for Bread, can vouch and put about the Nation, the falsest of things.

I am Yours.

A N S W E R.

The City-Clergyman has given the Lye to the Author of the Publick Occurrences: It were to be wish'd that the Author had nam'd all the rest besides those we already know, that were so Loyal as to Read the Declaration. If they were not so numerous as they are said to be in the Occurrences, we wish they had been as many in number as their Loyalty required: But we leave this for the Author himself, to do himself Justice by a more particular Answer.

F I N I S.

A
REPLY
 TO AN
ANSWER
 TO THE
City-Minister's Letter
 FROM HIS
COUNTRY FRIEND.

WHat! more Letters still? Yes, one more, 'tis but common Civility, when the City-Minister sends to his Friend in the Country, that the Country-Parson should answer the City-Minister again, else it would be said, That the Country-Parsons are Country-Parsons indeed, and have no Manners. They were not true Church of *England* Men without the Performance of due Ceremonies: A most kind Correspondence, a most harmonious Agreement! The City-mouse sends to the Country-Mouse, & the Country-mouse sends to the City-Mouse again. Nevertheless, these Sham-letters from Friend to Friend, for as such they must be looked upon, shew such a vicious Humour of

of Writing, that the Author must needs be thought to be troubled with a violent Itch of Scribbling. And what is all this for, but to Infect the People, not with their Itch of Scribbling, but with the Leprosie of their Obstinacy and Disobedience, and to make their Flocks as Scabby as themselves? These City and Country-Ministers see the Grandees of their Coat grow Popular and Gracious in the Eyes of the Mobile; and therefore now's the Time, they cry; our *Dagon* of Ecclesiastical Pre-eminence is falling, the Philistines are like to seize the Ark of our Worldly Glory; and therefore help Mobile, now or never. And this Sultry Heat of Passion and Self Interest it is that produces these Caterpillars and Locusts of Letters and Answers, that Prey upon the Blooming Fruits of Royal Industry to settle us in Peace and Tranquillity. Among the rest is come forth, a Discontented Sheet of Paper, called, *An Answer to the City-Minister's Letter, from his Country Friend*; which runs thus.

ANSWER

S I R,

It is not for me now to acknowledge my private Debt to you for the Favour of your Letter, since the Publick is as much concerned in it as I; and if I may judge of all, by the compass of my Neighbourhood and Acquaintance, I may assure you, They are not Insensible of your Obligation, though they are ignorant of the Author.

R E P L Y.

Here is Moral Justice, Thanks for the Letter, and the Proverb fulfilled to boot, *Graculus graculo assidet; Like mill to like, quoth the Devil to the Collier.* Had the Country-Parson done less, the City-Minister must have been very angry; for it was out of Respect that he sent to his Friend in the Country, and had his Friend failed him this Basket full of Praises by the return of the next Carrier, he had done amiss: And surely the *Citizen Incognito*, must be strangely tickled, to hear that his Pamphlet took so among the Neighbourhood. Here's the Mischief of it, That upon this Encouragement, there will be a Reply to this

this Answer, and a Rejoynder to that, and a Sur-rejoynder to that again, and so there will be no end of these Disturbing Shem Letters, as long as there is but a Private Press in London to divulge them. But here is not only a Present of Thanks, but a Wisp of fresh News too, out of the Country; more of the History of the Declaration: For says the Answerer,

A N S W E R.

The Country, as far as my Intelligence reaches, has followed the Example of the City, and refused to Read the Declaration of Indulgence, according to a certain Order, said to be the Kings, which we in the Country can scarce believe to be his; for it has neither been signified to the Ordinaries, according to the usual manner, nor could those that dispersed it give any account whence it came to them. I have heard indeed, That an Act of Council, concerning it, has been published in the Gazette; which I never saw, and if I had, I should scarce have thought Authentick: For I always took that Paper, as for its Authority, to have been all of a Piece, and that we were no more bound to take notice of any Order published there, under any Penalty, than we are to believe all the News from Poland or Constantinople: Nay, though this Order had come to us in due Form, yet had we had great reason to suspect something of Surreption and Surprise upon his Majesty in this matter, and that it could not proceed from his Majesties Free and Full Consent; for we cannot yet forget his repeated Professions of Kindness to us, and of Satisfaction in our Principles and Duty; and having done nothing since which might Forfeit his good Opinion; we are unwilling to believe, That it is his Majesties own Mind and Pleasure to Load us with such an Order, as we cannot execute with any Congruity, Safety, or Good Conscience.

R E P L Y.

Here is another Proverb fulfilled, *Birds of a Feather will hang together.* There was never any Contagion in the City, but it spread it self far into the Country: But why the Answerer should take such an Occasion as this, to quarrel with

the *Gazette*, to spoil the Communication of the Gentlemen, in the Country Ale and Coffee-houses, since it is one of the greatest Divertisements of the Country-Parsons themselves, is very strange. There is no Body thinks they were so highly obliged to Credit the *Gazette*; however, the Order it self was affixed to the Declaration, and that they ought to have believed. But their Ordinaries would not send them abroad, and so they were both agreed, the one not to Dispense them, and the other not to receive them, which no way excuses, but rather heightens the Act of Refractory Disobedience. But these *Thomas's* are so far from Believing the *Gazette*, that they will not Believe the King's Order it self: They have no Faith in *By the Kings most Excellent Majesty, and the Lords of His most Honourable Privy Council*; but tax the one with Surprizing, and the other with being Surprized, which is to tax the Council with Collusion, and the King of a Haughty and Undecent Piece of Arrogance, which none but Persons of the Answerers Temper durst ever have aspir'd to: An Insolence beyond that of the Giants themselves, thus to Assail the very Heaven it self of Sovereignty and Majesty. As if his Majesty did not Consult and Know what was Congruous, Safe and Proper for such a Lettermonger's Conscience as this, as well as himself. And now he comes to the Point, and proudly advancing his Reasons above the Kings, positively tells the World, That his Party cannot execute the Order with any Congruity, Safety or Good Conscience, For,

A N S W E R

I. *As to his Majesties Declaration, We of all His Majesties Subjects are the least concern'd in it; and with all Duty be it spoken, we cannot see, that our Legal Establishment receives any Addition by this Declaration. For there are yet, Thanks be to God, no Penal Laws to which our Congregations are obnoxious, and therefore we do not stand in need of any Toleration; yet it is upon Us only that the Reading of it is imposed. An Act which cannot well be Construed otherwise, than as a solliciting and tempting our own People to forsake our Communion. If this Declaration must needs be Read in any Religious Assemblies,*

Assemblies, in reason surely it should be in those that wholly owe their Subsistence to it. It would better have become the Roman than the Protestant Chappels. But in the Roman Church, Indulgence hath another signification; and belongs to those only that frequent their Churches, but not to such as believe them: For with them this is the only Sin that is not capable of Indulgence; but the Priests desire to be excused, lest while they proclaim Toleration to Others, they bring an Interdict upon Themselves. Or why, I pray, was not Fashion Pen Order'd to Publish it in his Meetings? Or the worthy Mr. Lobbe reputed Father of this Project, why had not He the benefit of his own Invention, and a Patent for being the sole Publisher of it within his own Pound? Or why was not my Lord Mayors Private and Elect Congregation thought worthy of so great a Grace? Surely it is not to draw upon us the Envy of the Dissenters, that the Honour of publishing this Declaration is imposed upon Us alone, when it belongs to all other Communion in the Kingdom except our own; and if we refuse it, I hope it will be imputed to our Modesty; for we are not ambitious of being Impertinent, or Busy-bodies in other Mens Matters.

R E P L Y.

There is no weight at all to be laid upon this Argument, either seemingly or really. For if the King be Master of his own Kingdom, and his own Subjects, he may Order his Declarations to be Read where he pleases. Are not they sole Opposers of the King's Conscience? Are not all the Churches and Chappels of the Kingdom in their Possession, which of Primary Right belong to the King? Or else why do they pay him Tribute of their First Fruits? And why then may not the King order his own Declarations to be Read in his own Churches and Chappels, to the end that their Congregations as well as other Assemblies may be made sensible of his Majesty's universal Clemency and Kindness to all his Subjects? Not as Trapans, to tempt the People to forsake the Communion of the Church of England, which is but a groundless and scandalous Insinuation of the Answerer. And whereas he says, the Church of England-Men are no way concern'd in the Toleration, so much the more reason have they to be thankful for the Enjoyment of their Liberty,

Liberty, and to testify their Gratitude, by Reading in their Churches those Orders which the King Commands to be Read; the Refusal of which is a flat Contempt of Royal Authority, and favours rather of Slight and Privacy, than of good Conscience. So that the *Answerer* might have spared his Reflections upon Mr. Pen and Mr. Lob, and the Lord Mayor's Select Congregation, which do but shew the malice of the *Answerer's* Heart; and the grudge he bears to the Indulgence which they enjoy under the favour of Royal Protection. He comes now to a Story, and tells us; That

A N S W E R.

A certain Person, much Greater than he deserves, but perhaps not so High, is said to have used the Words of Rabbah-keth upon this occasion, That the Church of England Clergy should Eat their own Dung, Isa. 36. 12. This Sentence might better have become a Messenger of the King of Assyria, than a pretended Counsellor of our own Prince, though some make a Question to which King he belongs; but God be thanked we are not yet so straightly besieged, as to be reduced to that Extremity; and though by the permission of God we should be reduced to so miserable a Condition, we should, I hope, by the Grace of God, be content to endure that and worse Extremities, if possible, rather than Betray or Surrender the City of God. But before that comes, it is possible that the *Fire*, that beleth'd our this nasty Insolence, may be stopp'd with something which is

R E P L Y.

As for this Tale of a Tub, or story of a Great Person, which he likens to a Messenger to the King of Assyria; other Men have as little reason to give credit to it, as he has to believe the News from Poland or Constantinople, in the Gazette. But whether true or false, they were only Words; not worse than the late actual Persecution of the Dissenters, which was very near reducing many of those People to the same Necessity, by impoverishing Fines, and Starving Imprisonments. From this story the *Answerer* proceeds to his second Reason, in these Words,

Answer.

ANSWER.

II. Besides there are some Passages in the Declaration, which in Conscience we cannot Read to our People, though it be in the King's Name; for among others, we are to read these words, We cannot but heartily wish, as will easily be believ'd, that all the People of our Dominions were Members of the Catholick Church. Our People know too well the English of this, and could not but be strangely surpriz'd to hear us tell them, That it would be an Acceptable thing to the King, that they should leave the Truth and our Communion, and turn Papist. The Wish of a King when solemnly Declared, is no light insignificant thing, but has real influence and effect upon the Minds of Men. It was but a Wish of Henry the Second that cut off Thomas Becket, then Archbishop of Canterbury. Councils and Courts of Justice too often bend to a King's Wishes, though against their own Inclinations, as well as against their Rule: And can we imagine that they can have no force at all upon the Common People? therefore we cannot in Conscience pronounce these words in the Ears of the People, whose Souls are committed to our Charge. For we should hereby lay a Snare before them, and become their Tempters, instead of being their Instructors; and in very fair and reasonable Construction, we shall be understood to solicit them to Apostacy, to leave the Truth of the Gospel, for Fables and the Mistakes of Men: A reasonable and decent Worship for Superstition and Idolatry; a true Christian Liberty for the most insupportable Bandage both of Soul and Body. If any will forsake our Doctrine and Fellow-Worship, which yet is not ours, but Christ's, at their own peril be it: But as for us, we are resolv'd, by the Grace of God, to lay no Stumbling-block in their way, nor to be accessary to their Ruins, that we may be able to declare our integrity with St. Paul, That we are pure from the blood of all men.

R E P E T.

Here is a notable Comment, as the Answerer believes, upon the King's hearty Wish. And yet if it be that they themselves are what they call themselves, the Catholick Church, certainly the King may be thought to wish on their side, That all the People of his Dominions were of their Opinion. But the Answerer has divid'd deep into the King's meaning, and interprets Catholick Church to be turning Papists. Though grant it were so; yet when a Person is fully persuaded of the Truth of the Religion

Religion which he professes, and believes in Conscience that he is in the Right, it is a usual thing for such to wish that others were of their Persuasion: And yet the Wish of Princes never made such a Conversion as the Answer to the City-Minister's Letter dreads, upon the idlest Surmises in the World. Because the Wish of a King cut off Archbishop *Becker*, therefore the King's Wishing, will make the People turn Papists. And therefore the Reading, of the King's Wish, is an Aloes Pill which they cannot swallow, not knowing what Influence it may have upon their Congregations. What greater Disparagement can there be to the laborious Preaching of the Churchmen of *England*, that the People should be so ill grounded in their Principles, and so wavering and unstable in their Faith, as to be Wish'd out of their Religion? This is a Surmise so idle, and a Fear so void of sense, that the *Answerer* may seem to have borrow'd this Argument from the Table of *Fortunatus's* Wishing-Cap. But there is another Passage in the *Declaration* puts the *Answerer* into a great Sweat. For says he,

ANSWERER.

III. *In the next place we are to declare in the King's Name*, That from henceforth the Execution of all, and all manner of Penal Laws, in matters Ecclesiastical, for not coming to Church, or not receiving the Sacrament, or for any other Nonconformity to the Religion established, or for, or by reason of the Exercise of Religion in any manner whatsoever, be immediately Suspended, and the further Execution of the said Penal Laws, and every of them, is hereby Suspended. What! All, and all manner of Laws in matters Ecclesiastical? What the Laws against Fornication, Adultery, Incest? for these are in Ecclesiastical matters. What! All Laws against Blasphemy, Profaness, open derision of Christian Religion? Yet these crimes are punishable by no other Laws here than such as have been made in favour of the Established Religion: How shall the Lords day be observ'd? What shall hinder covetous men to Plow and Cart, and follow their several Trades upon that day? since all the Laws, that secure this observance, and outward countenance of respect to the Christian Religion, are by this general expression laid aside.

REPLY.

Heaven's bless us! What a Din and Noise is here about the word All, and All to no purpose. For the People are to understand,

derstand, that the signification of *All Penal Laws in Matters Ecclesiastical* is restrained, to the Exercise of seperate Worship in Matters of Religion. The Abolition of which Laws does not give the least Liberty to Fornication, Adultery, Incest, Blasphemy, or Breach of Sabbath, as the *Answerer* so vainly and with so much out-cry pretends. For all these Misdemeanors are punished as well by Statutes of the Common Law, as by the Ecclesiastical Courts. And therefore all these Exclamations are merely Scare-Crows set up against Reading the Declaration. Arguments distill'd out of the *Answerers* Brain, by the Chymistry of his burning Zeal for beloved Ecclesiastical Tyranny; since there is not so much as one Law that is in force to secure the Observance of Divine Worship, or outward Countenance of Respect to Religion, laid aside by this General Expression. Besides that, all new Laws explain themselves, and secure what they would not have repeal'd by all the necessary *Proviso's* imaginable; and this no Question but the Act for a General Toleration would do, whenever it came out. And therefore the same Advice may be given to the *Answerer*, which *Ovid* gives his Friend that was afraid of his own Shadow.

Desine mitem animum vano infamare timore.

Sæva quid in placidis Saxa mereris aquis.

But the *Answerer* has found out more Choak-Pears still. For says he,

A N S W E R.

Besides these words, for not coming to Church, or not receiving the Sacrament, or for any other Nonconformity to the Religion Established, cannot in Conscience be read by us in our Churches, because they may be a temptation to young unguided people to neglect all manner of Religious Worship, and give them occasion of depriving themselves of such opportunities of grace and salvation, as these Penal Laws did often oblige them to use. For being discharg'd attendance on our Service, they are left at liberty to be of any Religion or none at all: Nay Christian Religion is by these general terms left at discretion, as well as the Church of England. For men may forsake us to become Jews or Mahometans, or Pagan Idolaters, as well as to be Papists or Dissenters, for any care taken in this Declaration to prevent it. And even of such as pretend to be Christians, there either are or may be such Blasphemous Sects, so dishonourable to our Common Lord

and Master, as are incapable of all publick encouragement and allowance; for that would involve the Government in the Imputation of those Blasphemies, and the whole Nation in that curse and vengeance of God, which such provocations may extort. Wherefore it is not out of any unreasonable opinion of our selves, nor disaffection to Protestant Dissenters that refuse to publish this Indulgence, but out of a tender care of the Souls committed to us, especially those of the weaker sort, to whom we dare not propose an Invitation to Popery, and much less any thing that may give countenance or encouragement to Irreligion. It is said indeed, that we are not required to Approve, but to Read it: To this, Sir, you have very well answer'd, That Reading was Teaching it; or if it be not so absolutely in the nature of the thing; yet in common Construction, I am afraid it would have been so understood. But we do not stand in need of this Excuse, for if there be any Passages in it, that are plain Temptations to Popery or Licentiousness; it cannot consist with our Duty either to God or the Church to Read them before our People.

R E P L Y.

The Remainder of this Paragraph rests upon false Consequences and wrong Conclusions. For the words, *for not coming to Church, or not receiving the Sacrament, or for any other Nonconformity to the Religion Established*, is no temptation to young unguided People to neglect all manner of Religious Worship. Nor does the discharge of their Attendance on the Service of the Church of England, leave them at liberty to be of no Religion at all; as if there were no way to Heaven but the Church of England Road. For the Abolition of the Penal Laws does not design the Allowance of Licentious Atheism, but Christian Liberty. For tho' the words of the Declaration are General, they only refer to a future Act, which the Answerer may be sure will be more exactly and particularly penn'd. And indeed Duty and Respect to his Prince, would have taught the Answerer more Manners, than thus all along to build the feeble Structure of his Fears and Jealousies upon the general Terms of the King's Declaration, loaded with Misconstruction, and taken in an ill Sense; more especially since they admit so easily a more candid and sincere Interpretation; and that indeed it is a meer piece of Folly, if not worse, to think that His Majesty by his Indulgence intended to set open a Gate for Licence of Irreligion.

Irreligion. Nor is it only Unmannerly but Disingenious, to put the Kings Declaration thus upon the Rack, on purpose to extort from it a Confession of Crimes, which was never intended, nor ever so much as dreamt of. Besides, the disparagement it brings to that which would be thought the choicest of the Protestant Churches, as if it had abandon'd the Pillars of sound Doctrin, to lean upon the feeble Supports of Spiritual Tyranny and Penal Laws. So that the refusing to Read the King's Declaration, can never be thought such a Zealous Care of Souls, as the Answerer pretends, but a Zealous Agony to pull down one Pope, and set up in his room as many Popes as there are Parish-Churches in the Kingdom.

A N S W E R.

As for the Dispensing Power, and the Oaths and Tests required to Qualifie Men for Offices Military and Civil, I must leave them to the Consideration of those who are nearer concern'd, and therefore reasonably presum'd to understand them better. Nor do I envy his Majesty the use of his Popish Subjects, though I do not know what Service they may be capable of doing more than other Men. This Nation has for some Time made hard Shift to subsist without much of their aid, and against the Wills of several of them: But now they are become the only necessary Men, and seem to want nothing but Number to fill all Places Military and Civil in the Kingdom; in the mean Time, the Odiousness of their Persons, and the Insolence of their Behaviour, with their way of Menacing of Strange things, makes some Abatement of the Merit of their Service.

R E P L Y.

As for what the Answerer here leaves to the Consideration of those that are nearer concern'd, there needs no further Replication to it. And for his granting his Majesty so kindly, the use of his Subjects, let them thank him, that are most nearly obliged. However, he has given them such a Brand with his Pen, by the Character bestow'd upon them of *Odious, Insolent, and Menacers of Strange Things*, as lays a terrible Censure upon the Choice of their Persons: Which shews him to have wrote his Answer in Heat of Blood, without either Charity or common Civility: And when all comes to all, deserves no other Answer, Than that of *Clodius accusat Moechos*. But now he comes to his Conclusion.

A N S W E R.

A N S W E R.

Lastly, The Respect which we have for his Majesties Service, will not permit us to Read the Appendix to the Declaration: Where the Flower of the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom are something hardly reflected on, as Persons that will not contribute to the Peace and Honour of the Nation; because they would not consent to the Taking away the Laws against Papists, that they may be put into a Condition to give us Laws. The Persons here reflected on, we know to be the Chief for Ability, and Interest, and Inclination to serve the King, and therefore cannot do his Majesty that Disservice as to be Publishers of their Disgrace, and make our selves the Instruments of alienating from His Majesty the Affections of his best Subjects. Nay, we find in our selves a strange Difficulty to believe that this could come from His Majesty, who has Experienced their Faithfulness upon so many and Pressing Occasions. This could not well proceed from any but a Stranger to those Honourable Persons, and the Nation, and a greater Stranger to Shame and Good Manners; and what have We to do to Publish the Venom and Virulency of a Jesuit?

R E P L Y.

A very respectful Conclusion truly; to quarrel with the Appendix to the Declaration, which whosoever reads, must certainly acknowledge, that never any thing was said with more Glory, or a more studious and solemn Care of the Publick Weal. And yet this Country Parson, according to his usual Way of Mis-construction, will have it to be a hard Reflection upon the Nobility and Gentry of the Kingdom, As Persons that will not contribute to the Peace and Honour of the Nation; and this he calls, the Venom and Virulency of a Jesuite, So Virulently does this same Country Sophister flatter the Nobility and Gentry at the Expence of Royal Reputation. But such false Glosses upon the Royal Text as these, are too Plain and Notorious to prevail upon the Judgments of the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom, who will sooner believe the candid Expressions of their Sovereign than the wrested Fictions of a Country Expofitor.

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